

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Medical Errors Are the Third Highest Cause of Death in United States

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University released [findings](#) on Tuesday about the high prevalence of deaths in the United States due to medical errors. Their data show that 250,000 Americans die each year due to doctors' and other health care providers' mistakes. Only heart disease and cancer kill more people per year. The Centers for Disease Control does not track deaths due to medical errors.

The types of errors the researchers tracked ranged from mistakes during surgery to prescribing the wrong doses of medication, as well as organizational issues such as breakdowns in communication. Part of the problem is that hospitals often do not have a standardized operating procedure when dealing with patients or investigating mistakes. The publishers of the report want hospitals to keep the same types of meticulous records as airline companies.

“To minimize the risk, seniors should take special care in preventing medical errors. Keeping records of your medications and dosages and asking questions of your doctor are good starts to keeping yourself safe,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

## Verizon Protesters Converge on Shareholders' Meeting in Albuquerque in Day of Action

As the Verizon workers' strike continues, protestors held demonstrations on Thursday [across the country](#) and outside the Albuquerque hotel where the annual shareholders' meeting was taking place. The strike began in April, when 39,000 workers walked off the job after contract negotiations failed.

The workers, members of two unions — the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers — represent installers, customer service employees, repairmen and other service workers in Connecticut, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., for Verizon's wireline business. Despite being one of the nation's most profitable companies, [executives](#) are trying to cut employee health and retirement benefits, freeze pensions, make layoffs easier, and use more contract workers.

About 300 protestors from all over New Mexico met outside the Hotel Albuquerque. Many organizations, including the Alliance, took to social media to show their support for the strikers. On Twitter, the hashtag '#verizonstrike' was used in a “Twitterstorm” on Thursday, with dozens of organizations tweeting simultaneously.

“These employees have worked loyally for Verizon – many for decades, and they deserve to collect the pension benefits they were promised,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Good wages and benefits will also help with Verizon's own long term viability.”

## Strict Texas Voter ID Law Won't be challenged by U.S. Supreme Court – For Now

Last week the U.S. Supreme Court declined to put Texas' voter ID law on hold while the legal battle to repeal it continues. Enacted in 2011, it is the strictest in the nation, only allowing voters to use limited types of identification to prove their identity at the polls. While gun licenses are allowed, college IDs are not. An estimated [600,000 registered voters](#) do not have the required ID to satisfy the law's requirements. The law disproportionately affects seniors' ability to vote, partly because many seniors no longer drive and therefore do not maintain an active driver's license.

Texas has only had two registered cases of in-person voter fraud in the last decade, which activists say points to a political motive for the law rather than an actual legal need. The stories of seniors who have already been affected are particularly [devastating](#).

Further north last week, Wisconsin Alliance members protested Governor **Scott Walker's** newest voter ID restriction - legislation that prohibits counties and towns from issuing photo IDs. To learn more about what states require voter ID or to get assistance in the voting process, click <http://www.866ourvote.org> or call 1-866-OUR-VOTE.

"Many older Americans have limited ability to travel to the DMV in order to obtain ID just for voting," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "We must protect our seniors from disenfranchisement."

## Northeast Regional Conference is Just around the Corner

Election protection and voting rights were topics at the Alliance's Midwest Regional conference in Detroit this week, with **Jamal Watkins** from the AFL-CIO speaking on those subjects. In the Regional Board member elections, **Tim Foley** of Michigan and **Larry Malone** of Missouri were re-elected. Alliance members were briefed on the [consumer boycott](#) of Mexican-made Nabisco snacks by **Ron Baker** of the BCTGM International Union and discussed retiree issues in the 2016 elections. **Will Fischer** spoke about the Union Veterans Council.



Left to right: Tim Foley, Joseph Peters, Jr., Larry Malone

There is still time to register [online](#) for the Northeast Regional Conference in Washington, DC on May 19-20. During the conference members will elect four regional board members and prepare for the 2016 general election. Questions? Contact **Joni Jones** at [jjones@retiredamericans.org](mailto:jjones@retiredamericans.org) or 202-637-5377.

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The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.3 million retirees and their families.